J: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1936) 1937 8V3 Haiti 8V3 Mirebalais

deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

L: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'resté à caille 'eux* — small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nèg; li pa fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
● 84 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
431 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 220 ff.